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The President's Daily Brief

September 4, 1974

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the Director of Central Intelligence

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

September 4, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

With a broad program to modernize the USSR's inter-continental ballistic missile force [redacted]

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[redacted]
USSR

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(Page 2)

[redacted]
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South Vietnamese President Thieu's decision to send a high-level representative to the US to lobby for more military aid reflects Saigon's growing concern over its ability to contain increased communist attacks. (Page 5)

Ethiopia, [redacted]

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Morocco continues to improve its military posture in the area adjacent to Spanish Sahara and Algeria. (Page 8)

South Korea has mounted a strong anti-Japanese campaign, demanding that Tokyo take action against North Korean front organizations in Japan or face a diplomatic break. (Page 9)

Notes on the USSR and Laos appear on Page 10.

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intercontinental ballistic missile force [redacted]

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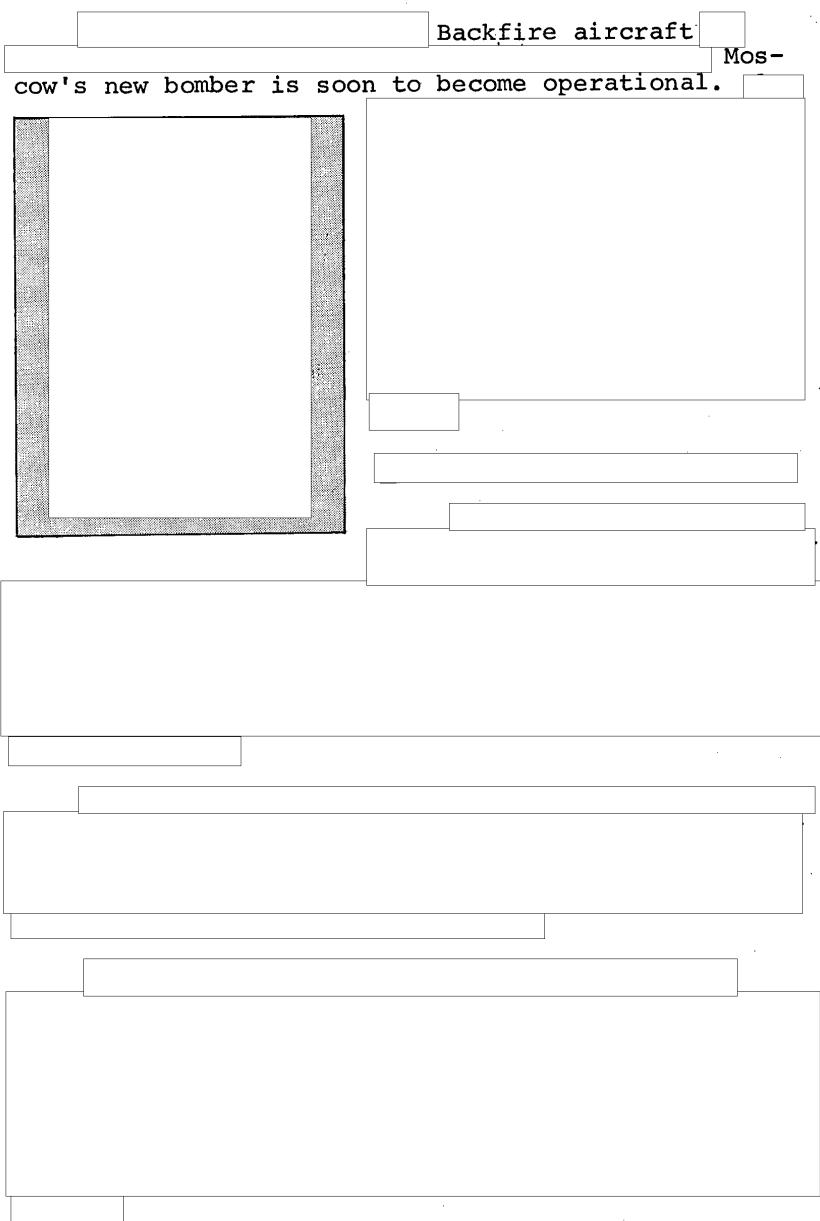
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Soviet Intentions

The Soviets probably intend to use the Backfire as a strike aircraft. Flying from the USSR, the Backfire could reach all of Europe, China, and the sea approaches to the USSR on two-way missions without aerial refueling. Some Backfires will probably be equipped to perform reconnaissance and electronic warfare missions.

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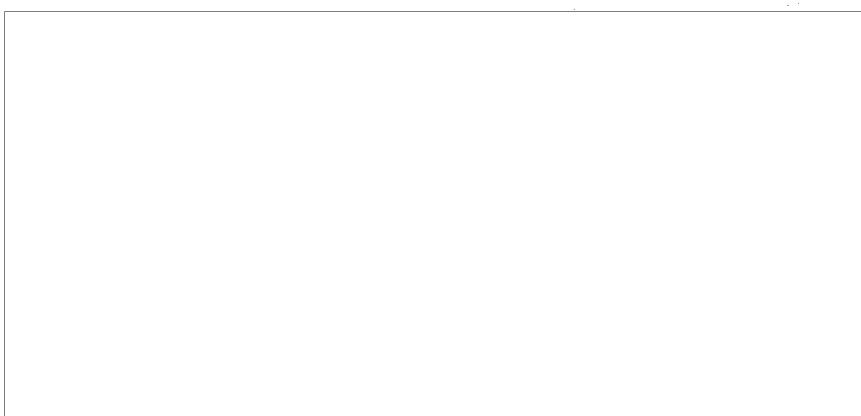
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USSR-MIDDLE EAST



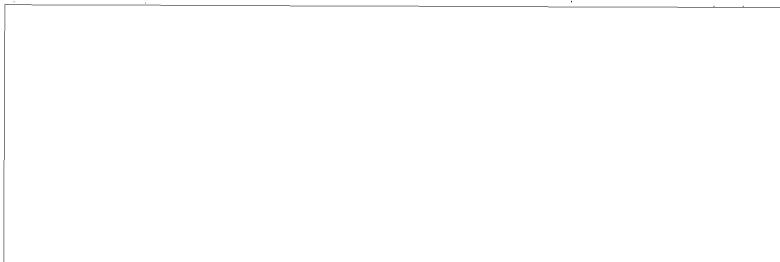
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SOUTH VIETNAM

President Thieu's decision to send a high-level representative to the US to lobby for more military aid reflects Saigon's growing concern over its ability to contain increased communist attacks. Although some South Vietnamese commanders believe they can cope with the current level of fighting, they are less sure about the longer term, especially if the communists decide to launch a large offensive sometime next year.

Saigon has ordered fairly serious reductions in aircraft and ammunition usage. Combat support sorties and reconnaissance missions have in some areas been reduced by as much as 50 percent; the average reduction countrywide, according to the US military mission in Saigon, is approximately 36 percent. These reductions in air support have led some commanders to request Saigon's approval to evacuate outposts and forward positions that can be supplied only by helicopter or airdrop.



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Field and regional commanders have viewed the reductions in combat support as the chief cause of the government problems on the battlefield. Saigon's Joint General Staff apparently believes, however, that these reductions, and even further cutbacks, can be accomplished without seriously jeopardizing the country's defenses.

So far, the General Staff appears to have President Thieu's support for its position.



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If the situation deteriorates seriously, requests by field commanders for additional amounts of ammunition and air support probably will be granted.

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Meanwhile, the fighting goes on. The communists have pushed government units back from several positions in the northern provinces and near Saigon, and there are no signs of any letup. Although most of the positions the government has lost are remote and unimportant strategically, their fall nonetheless has allowed the communists to get closer to towns, government bases, and roads whose loss or interdiction would be serious.

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ETHIOPIA

The future of the Emperor and of the monarchy as an institution are under sharp debate within the powerful Armed Forces Coordinating Committee, according to the US embassy in Addis Ababa. The Committee is the dominant political force in the country, even though it has no official status. Intensified public attacks on Haile Selassie in recent days were probably approved by the Committee.

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Over the weekend, a well-organized group demonstrated in front of the Emperor's palace and at other points in the capital, calling for him to step down. Posters depicting Haile Selassie as indifferent to drought victims appeared in Addis Ababa, and he reportedly was spat on and cursed on his way to church. The Ethiopian radio and press accused him of salting away large sums of money in foreign banks.

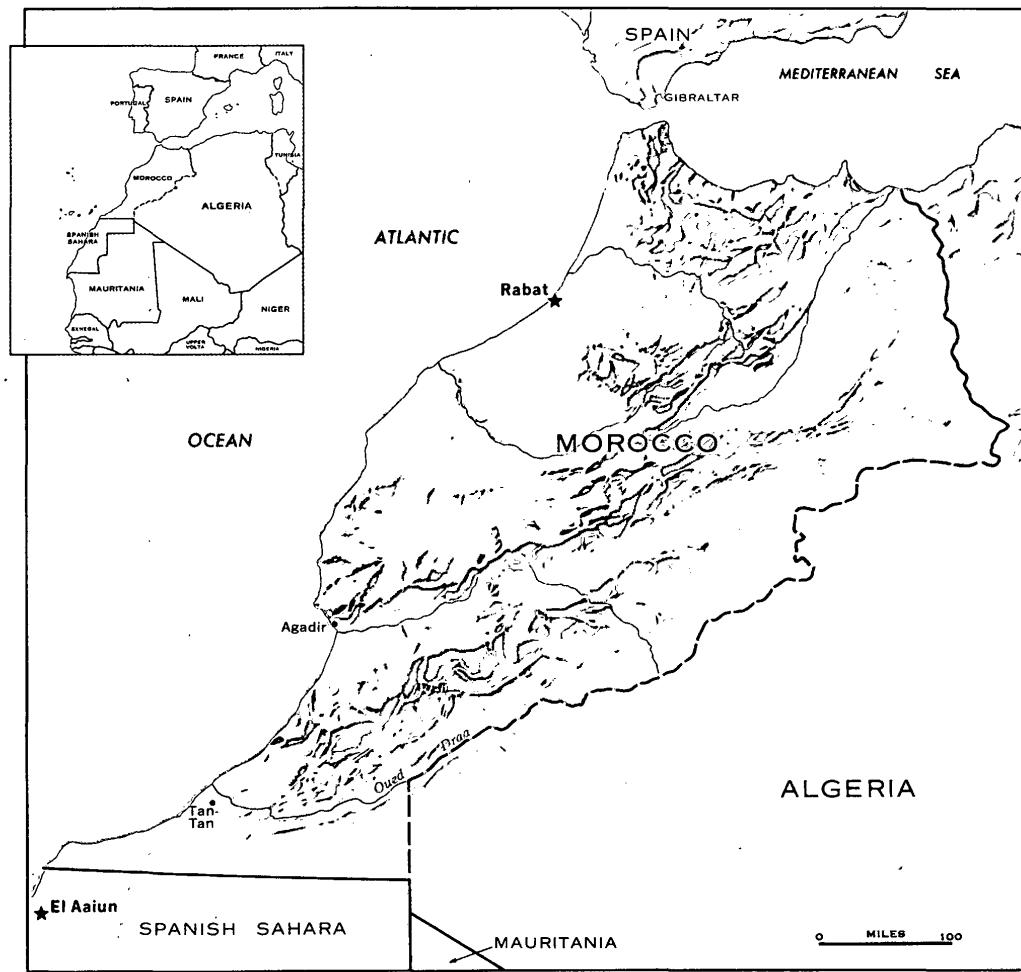
Following the demonstrations, the Committee issued a statement forbidding public protest and ordered out armed police and military patrols. The Committee apparently fears that further demonstrations could get out of hand.

Faced with mounting censure, Haile Selassie could choose to abdicate. The US embassy in London has been informed by a British official that the Emperor's grandson made an approach yesterday through the British embassy in Addis Ababa to sound out the possibility of political asylum for the Emperor in the UK.

Although some military leaders still want to retain the monarchy, the advocates of this course appear to be losing out.

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MOROCCO-SPAIN-ALGERIA

Morocco continues to improve its military posture in the area adjacent to Spanish Sahara and Algeria. It is increasingly concerned that its campaign to "recover" Spanish Sahara and secure its southern borders will stimulate an Algerian military reaction.

The commander of Moroccan forces in the south claims that Algerian troops have moved some border markers to the west. He has stated he intends to re-establish control in these areas by moving in Moroccan troops.



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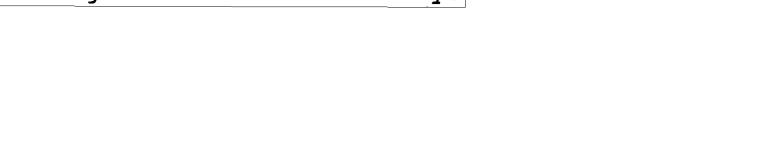
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As regards Spain, King Hassan apparently does not want to close the door to further diplomatic contacts and is unlikely to resort to force as long as negotiations are under way.



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JAPAN - SOUTH KOREA

In the wake of the attempted assassination of President Pak last month, Seoul has mounted a strong anti-Japanese campaign, demanding that Tokyo take action against North Korean front organizations in Japan or face a diplomatic break.

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Seoul says, Tokyo must fully investigate the Japanese aspects of the assassination case and severely restrict the activities of pro-Pyongyang organizations in Japan. Seoul implies that Japanese failure to do this would likely lead to a diplomatic break.

Tokyo may attempt to reduce the heat by issuing a conciliatory statement, but no early resolution is in sight. The Japanese are willing to investigate, but they will probably not be able to confirm all the South Korean allegations of North Korean involvement, let alone satisfy the other demands.

Routine trade and aid dealings between the two countries have already been adversely affected, but there is no evidence that Tokyo is planning to modify its policy of diplomatic support for Seoul at the UN General Assembly session later this month. A formal diplomatic break between Tokyo and Seoul anytime soon appears unlikely.

Relations between the two could become even more tense if the Japanese prove unresponsive to Pak's demands. In this event, Seoul's [redacted] verbal blasts could escalate into action. For example, the South Korean ambassador could be withdrawn and the Japanese ambassador expelled, Japanese fishing boats could be harassed in Korean waters, or rigorous immigration controls could be imposed. Even in the absence of a diplomatic break, continuation of the present level of bickering probably would, over time, lead the Japanese in the direction of a more even-handed posture vis-a-vis the two Koreas.

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NOTES

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Laos: Phoumi Vongvichit, communist deputy prime minister and foreign minister, apparently regards the Lao political and security situation as sufficiently stabilized to permit his absence from the country.

Phoumi and his non-communist counterpart, Leuam Insisiengmay, are jointly heading the coalition government during Souvanna's absence. The US ambassador reports that Phoumi is being reasonable and cooperative in this role.

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